SIATRAS NUMISMATIC STUDIES, 16

Demetrius N. Siatras

The *ex*-Meletopoulos Collection of Greek and Roman Coins

ATHENS 2025

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FOREWORD

The forefather of the Meletopouloi family, an eminent household of Piraeus, was Nicolaus D. Meletopoulos (Argos 1814 – Piraeus 1878), land-owner, banker, and businessman. Nicolaus moved to Piraeus in 1844 and began acquiring land. At the time, Piraeus was a small fishing village. From his marriage to Marianna Bones twelve children were born; the tenth was *Alexandros,* who studied archaeology in Paris. He later returned and permanently settled in Piraeus; he also began collecting ancient artifacts, inscriptions and coins.[1] While searching for antiquities in the area, he identified the foundation stones of the famous *Skevothece* of Philon (destroyed by Sulla in 86 BC) — a large public building used to store naval equipment for the triremes of the Athenian naval base — and in 1882 published the homonymous inscription, which is now housed in the Epigraphical Museum of Athens.[2] The inscriptions from his collection (mostly tombstones from the northern cemetery of Piraeus) were later donated to the Archaeological Museum of Piraeus by his son Ioannes.

However, the most important achievement of Al. Meletopoulos was his collection of ancient coins, some of which were unique. In the catalogue, which he compiled and published himself in 1884,[3] a total of 6,173 numismatic items are listed (coins, tokens, symbols, a few lead seals).

The coin collection as a whole no longer exists; its dispersal had already begun during Alexandros Meletopoulos' lifetime (donations of his

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[1] Γ. Δρόσου, *Πειραιᾶς, 1960. Ζωὴ καὶ τέχνη*. Πειραιᾶς 1961, pp. 138-141.

[2] Ἀλ. Ν. Μελετοπούλου, *Ἀνέκδοτος ἐπιγραφή: Ἡ Σκευοθήκη τοῦ Φίλωνος*. Ἀθῆναι, 1882.

[3] *Κατάλογος τῶν ἀρχαίων νομισμάτων, συμβόλων καὶ κερματίων τῆς συλλογῆς Ἀλεξάνδρου Ν. Μελετοπούλου*, Ἀθῆναι 1884. As he writes in the preface, he followed the method proposed by Eckhel (in *Doctrina numorum veterum*), while also considering the works of J. Sabatier and H. Cohen for the Roman and Byzantine coins; he further acknowledges a significant debt to the Greek numismatist A. Postolacca regarding the attribution of many pieces.

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are recorded in the acquisitions of the Numismatic Museum in Athens). A significant portion (approximately 1,150 coins) was sold to the Credit Bank of Greece (today Alpha Bank) in 1972; these coins, along with those from the Andreopoulos collection, formed the nucleus of the Bank's numismatic collection. The catalogue of this core collection was published by Alan Walker in 1978 and includes all the coins the Bank acquired from both collections. The fate of the remaining items is unknown; they were likely sold gradually to private collectors. Some lesser-value pieces may still be in the possession of surviving descendants.

Therefore, the current edition serves more of a historical role than a practical one; it is a compilation of the Meletopoulos 1884 catalogue and the material related to the Meletopoulos collection in Alan Walker's 1978 catalogue. We noticed that the latter contains pieces not included in the former; this is likely due to the fact that Meletopoulos continued collecting coins even after the publication of his catalogue; approximately 300 pieces were added to the collection after 1884.[5]

In the present edition, the coins from Meletopoulos' 1884 catalogue are reproduced in the tables I–IV, with some corrections noted in the relevant entries. The following six tables contain coins from Alan Walker's catalogue, which today belong to the Alpha Bank collection. Coins marked with an asterisk (*) are illustrated in the plates at the end of this volume. Coins marked with a double asterisk (**) are illustrated in the plates included in Alan Walker's catalogue.**

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[4] Alan Walker, *Ancient Greek Coins - The Credit Bank Collection*. Athens: Hellenic Numismatic Society, 1978.

[5] Meletopoulos himself mentions (1884 *Catalogue*, p. 99) that after its publication, he acquired 3 gold, 13 amber, 148 silver and 136 copper specimens.

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EUROPA

◈ HISPANIA CITERIOR

ΕΜΠΟΡΙΑΙ / EMPORIUM Æ <1>

1. Alpha Bank Collection, No. 1M [= *SNG Munich* 109].
   Athena goddess. ∩ Pegasus.

◈ GALLIA NARBONENSIS

ΜΑΣΣΑΛΙΑ / MASSALIA Æ <30>, Æ <1>

1. Alpha Bank Collection 2M*, 3M [= *SNG München* 375].
   Æ. Drachm. *Obv.:* Artemis, *r.* ∩ Lion, *l.* ΦΞΗ
2. Alpha Bank Collection 4M [= Grose 45/6].
   Æ. Apollo. ∩ Bull.

NEMAYΣOΣ / NEMAUSUS

Augustus & Agrippa Æ <6>

◈ ITALIA

APULIA

ʽΡΥΨ / RUBI Æ <1>

BRUTTIUM Æ <3>

ΕΠΙΖΕΦΥΡΙΟΙ ΛΟΚΡΟΙ / LOCRI EPIZEPHYRII Æ <2>

ΚΡΟΤΩΝ / CROTON Æ <2>

ʽΡΗΓΙΟΝ / RHEGIUM Æ <2>, Æ <6>

1. Alpha Bank 8M [= *SNG Copen.* 1982/83].
   Æ. Tetras. *Obv.:* Dioscuri. ∩ Hermes.

ΤΕΡΙΝΑ / TERINA Æ <1>

VALENTIA (*ex*-IPPONIUM) Æ <1>

CALABRIA

BRUNDISIUM Æ <2>

ΤΑΡΑΣ / TARENTUM Æ <3>, Æ <1>

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ASIA

◈ ΠΟΝΤΟΣ / PONTUS

ΑΜΙΣΟΣ or ΠΕΙΡΑΙΕΥΣ / AMISUS or PIRAEUS
- α. ΠΕΙΡΑΙΕΥΣ — Æ <2>
- β. ΑΜΙΣΟΣ — Æ <8>
  1. Alpha Bank 832M [= *BMC* 16-21]. Æ, 17 mm.
  2. Alpha Bank 833M [= Malloy 30a]. Æ, 20 mm.
  3. Alpha Bank 834M [= Malloy 30h]. Æ, 19 mm.
  4. Alpha Bank 835M [= Malloy 33r]. Æ, 24 mm.
  5. Alpha Bank 836M [= Malloy 45k]. Æ, 20 mm.

ΤΡΑΠΕΖΟΥΣ / TRAPEZOUS - *Gallienus* — Æ <1>

ΦΑΡΝΑΚΙΑ / PHARNACIA — Æ <2>

Kings of Pontus and Bosporus:
- *Polemon II and Claudius* — Æ <1>
- *Rhescuporis I and Tiberius* — Æ <1>

◈ ΠΑΦΛΑΓΟΝΙΑ / PAPHLAGONIA

ΑΜΑΣΤΡΙΣ / AMASTRIS — Æ <1>

ΚΡΩΜΝΑ / CROMNA — Æ <1>

ΣΙΝΩΠΗ / SINOPE — Æ <5>, Æ <1>

◈ ΒΙΘΥΝΙΑ / BITHYNIA

ΑΠΑΜΕΙΑ / APAMEIA — Æ <4>
- *S. Severus* — Æ <1>

ΝΙΚΑΙΑ / NICAEA — Æ <1>
- *S. Severus* — Æ <1>
- *Geta* — Æ <1>
- *Al. Seberus* — Æ <1>
- *Gallienus* — Æ <1>
  1. Alpha Bank 839M [= *SNG von Aulock* 728]. Æ, 25 mm.

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23. Alpha Bank 1023M [= Milne 4891*ff*].
Pot, tetradrachm, 19 mm. *Diocletian*. ↺ Eagle.
24. Alpha Bank 1024M [= Milne 4931].
Pot, tetradrachm, 17 mm. *Diocletian*. ↺ Elpis.

Valerius Maximianus Æ <4>

25. Alpha Bank 1025M [= Milne 4814].
Pot, tetradrachm, 19 mm. Maximianus. ↺ Elpis.

◈ CYRENAICA

ΚΥΡΗΝΗ / CYRENE *AV* <9>, Æ <11>, Æ <7>

1. Alpha B. 1026M** [= *BMC* 98a]. Æ, drachm, 15 mm.
2. Alpha B. 1027M [= *BMC* 229]. Æ, didrachm, 19 mm.
3. Alpha Bank 1028M [= *BMC* 339]. Æ, 16 mm.
4. Alpha Bank 1029M [= *BMC* 26]. Æ, 16 mm.
5. Alpha Bank 1030M [= *BMC* 62*ff*]. Æ, 16 mm.

With inscription L. LOLLIUS Æ <2>

Trajan Æ <2>

Marcus Aurelius Æ <1>

◈ ZEUGITANIA

ΚΑΡΧΗΔΩΝ / CARTHAGE *AV* <1>, Æ <11>

1. Alpha Bank 1031M [*cf. SNG Copenhagen* 109*ff*].
Æ, 16 mm. Walker remarks (p. 76): “Obv. not struck”.
2. Alpha Bank 1032M [= *SNG Copenhagen* 167*ff*].
Æ, 20 mm.

◈ UNCERTAIN & UNIDENTIFIED

VARIA ΗΛ. <8>, Æ <14>, Æ <85>

1-19. Alpha Bank 1033M, 1034M, 1036M, 1037M**, 1038M-1041M, 1043M-1051M, 1054M**, 1055M.

◈ LEAD TESSERAE & LEAD SEALS Μ <739>

1-16. Alpha Bank 1166M-1181M, Greco-Roman, mostly one-sided.
17-18. Alpha Bank 1182M-1183M, Roman, one-sided.
19-21. Alpha Bank 1184M-1186M, Byzantine.

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Meletopoulos' COINS *of the* ROMAN REPUBLIC in the Alpha Bank Collection

No. in Alan Walkers' Catalogue	
1057M*.	Mercury. ∩ Prow. Sextans. Æ, 29 mm (*ca.* 217-215 BC).
1058M.	God Janus. ∩ Prow. Æ, 32 mm.
1059M.	Similar. Æ, 30 mm.
1060M.	Roma. ∩ Dioscuri. Denarius. ÆR, 21 mm.
1061M.	Dei penates. ∩ Oath scene. Denarius. ÆR, 17 mm.
1062M.	Jupiter. ∩ Victory. Quinarius. ÆR, 14 mm.
1063M.	Liber. ∩ Pegasus. Denarius. ÆR, 17 mm.
1064M.	Apollo. ∩ Cornucopia. Denarius. ÆR, 17 mm.
1065M*.	Diana. ∩ Sacricice. Denarius. ÆR, 21mm.
1066M.	Female bust. ∩ Eagle. Denarius. ÆR, 17 mm.
1067M.	Vesta. ∩ Voter. Denarius. ÆR, 17 mm.
1068M.	Ancus Marcius. ∩ Statue. Denarius. ÆR, 19 mm.
1069M.	Salus. ∩ Valetudo. Denarius. ÆR, 17 mm.
1070M.	Sun. ∩ Crescent and stars. Denarius. ÆR, 17 mm.
1071M.	Galley. ∩ Eagle and two standards. Denarius. ÆR, 17 mm.
1072M.	Similar, 16 mm.
1073M.	Similar, 19 mm.

COINS *of the* ROMAN EMPIRE

In the final section of his catalogue, Meletopoulos includes various coins from both the Eastern and Western Roman Empires, lead seals, a few specimens from the Latin emperors of Constantinople, as well as some modern coins. The classification is unclear and lacks detail; therefore, we are unable to provide further information on this section. All these pieces number fewer than 900, out of a total of 6,173 included in the 1884 catalogue. In contrast, the corresponding section in Alan Walker's catalogue comprises about 90 pieces (from No. 1074M to the end of the list).

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Plate I, coins 1-15.

MORGANTINA, SICILY

1. Æ 4¾. Laureate head of Apollo with richly curled hair, right. Behind it, the letter Λ.

℧ Eagle flying to the left, with a snake in its talons; the snake is barely distinguished.

In the field, above the eagle's head: ΜΟΡΓΑΝΤΙΝ℧-Ν, in semicircular arrangement. The whole in a circle of dots.

Found in Piraeus. Extremely rare. Corroded. A similar specimen is included in the British Museum collection (*Catalogue of the Greek Coins in the British Museum - Sicily*. London 1876, pp. 114-115), but without the letter Λ, and the style of Apollo's head does not appear consistent with the typical Sicilian type. The Museum of Naples also possesses a comparable piece, though the letters differ and appear in mirror script (*Catalogo del museo nazionale di Napoli - Medagliere I - Monete greche*. Napoli MDCCCLXX, p. 85, coin No. 4651). [The next coin in the same catalogue is similar (Nos. 4652-4654). See also five pieces bearing the legends ΜΟΡΓ, ΜΟΡΓΑΝ, ΜΟΡΓΑΝΤΙΝ℧Ν in *SNG Cop., Sicily*, Nos. 471-475].

CRITHOTE, THRACIAN CHERSONESE

2. Æ 5½. Laureate head of Apollo, facing; the whole within a circle of dots.

℧ ΚΡΙΘΟΥ-ΣΙ℧Ν in two lines. A grain of barley within an ear wreath.

Found in Athens. Mionnet's reading (*Suppl.* tom. II, p. 533) is incorrect: ΚΡΙΘΟΣΙ℧Ν. Cadalvène (*Recueil de méd. grecq. inéd.*, p. 28) gives the correct reading.

URANOPOLIS

3. Æ 2, corroded. Crescent with horns (cavity) facing upwards; eight-rayed star above, all within a faint circle of dots.

℧ ΟΥΡΑΝΙΔ℧Ν – ΠΟΛΕ℧Σ in two lines.

Aphrodite Urania, wearing a long tunic, seated left on a globe; she raises a sceptre in her right hand, while her left rests on her knee. Facing head wearing a headdress terminating in an indistinct pyramid-shaped object at

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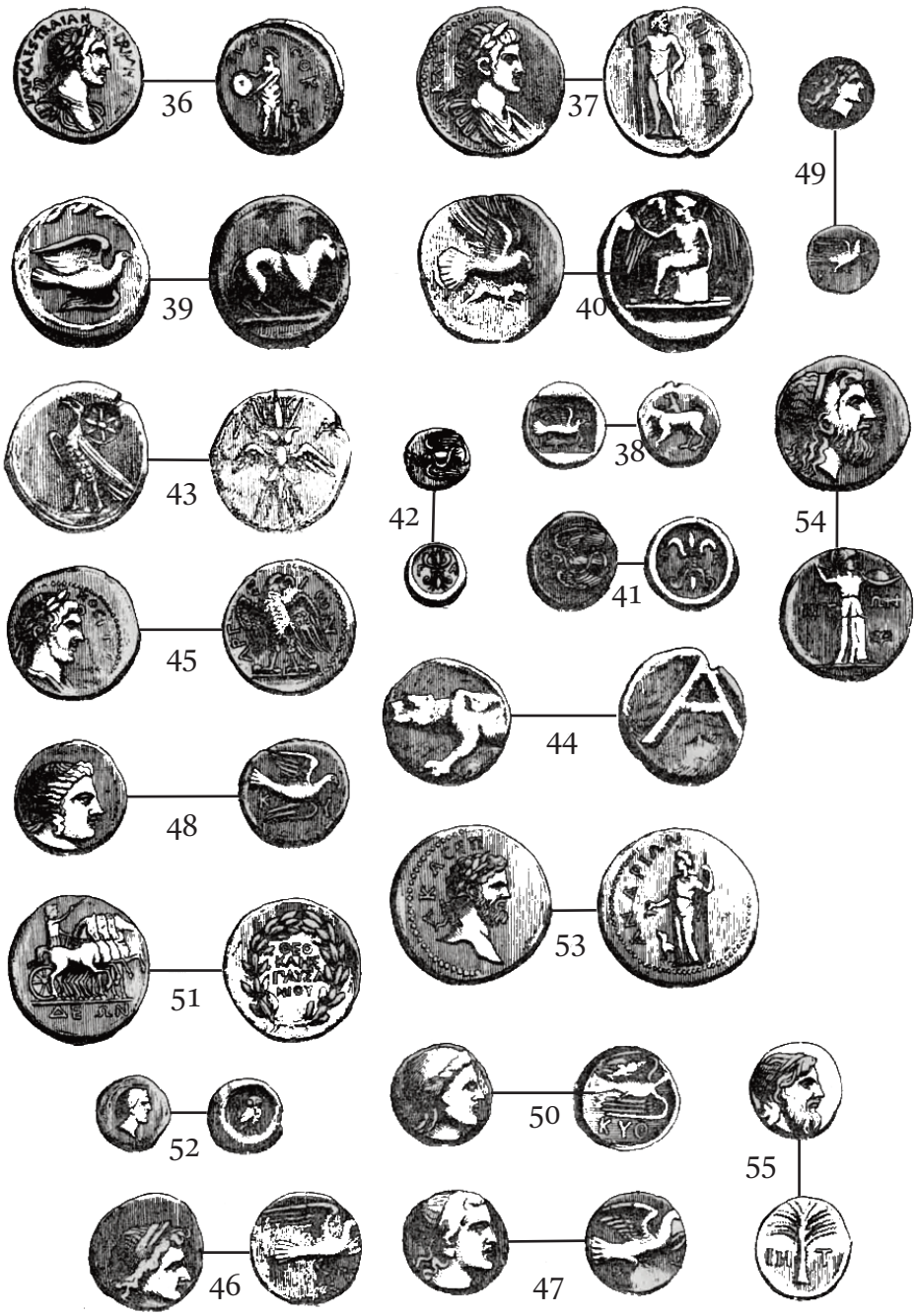
PLATE III



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